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29 November 1962

File: Ops-Cartello

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Records Administration Officer

SUBJECT : Notification of Records Disposition by the
Records Center

1. Last week when an Office of Security Officer in SRS inquired about procedures to be used by the Records Center to prevent premature disposal of his inactive files in the Center, I raised the question to you. Your reply of 21 November is quite specific and direct when it states that "the Records Management Officer for each component assumes responsibility for disposal dates and actions."

2. In line with this responsibility you indicate is mine, I shall attempt to create a filing system with appropriate "tickler forms" and signal devices to warn me to take an alerting action just prior to the expiration of the records storage period. I shall then contact the operating offices concerned and obtain a final opinion concerning their retired files which are scheduled for destruction.

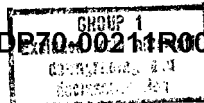
3. However, my immediate observation is that a local component follow-up procedure has a high percentage of built-in limitations and opportunities for failure. I sympathize with the pessimistic reservations held by Operating Officers about a possible premature disposal of their records. In this memo I use "premature" to mean "disposal before the owner wanted it to happen because circumstances extended his originally requested disposal date." Besides the normal incidents in the Security and intelligence field which create such mitigating circumstances, the dangers are compounded by several Agency-wide problems such as:

- a. Part-time assignment of Records Officers.
- b. Varying degrees of personal competence and attention to records disposition duties.

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c. Absence of a consistent continuity in component:

- (1) Records Officer assignments.
- (2) Files related to records retired to the Center.
- (3) Reorganization of offices and responsibilities.

4. In theory, the component Records Officer should be able to provide a personal attention and an intimate knowledge for controlling records disposal on a decentralized basis. I shall strive personally to prove the theory right in the Office of Security during my present assignment. However, because my concern is Agency-wide, I feel obliged to impose upon you an expression of my opinion on this problem. I honestly believe that at present the Agency records will suffer under a decentralized disposal control procedure. I am convinced that the Records Center has proven it can provide a consistent, long range control, unhindered by personnel changes and imperfections; regardless of component reorganization and disorganization. I suggest we continue the centralized control while endeavoring to develop a reliable network of decentralized control points.

5. Thanks again for hearing me out and for all your frequent and patient assistance with my local records problems.



Records Management Officer
Office of Security

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cc: Chief, Records Center

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